United Nations Urges Worldwide Shift Away From Animal Products

Over the last few years, report after report has surfaced, conclusively linking animal agriculture to global warming, air and water pollution, and land degradation. The most prominent of these reports, the UN FAO's Livestock's Long Shadow, famously credited 18% of all greenhouse gas emissions to animal agriculture, and blamed the sector for a myriad of other environmental troubles. The report stopped short, however, of actually recommending a change in diet, and instead called for improved agriculture practices.

A new United Nations report entitled Assessing the Environmental Impacts of Consumption and Production is the first of its stature to actually stress the necessity of moving away from meat and dairy. Specifically, the paper says that "impacts from agriculture are expected to increase substantially due to population growth [and] increasing consumption of animal products [...] A substantial reduction of impacts would only be possible with a substantial worldwide diet change, away from animal products."

The report goes into detail about the consequences we can expect if business continues as usual. Increases in population and wealth have historically resulted in increased consumption of meat, dairy, and eggs, which they blame for the bulk of agriculture's environmental impact. Agriculture is said to be responsible 70% of global freshwater consumption, 38% of the total land use and 19% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions.

It is now undeniable that we need to substantially reduce our use of animal products in order to prevent global catastrophe. The simplest way to do this is to adopt a vegan diet, which, in addition to avoiding all of animal agriculture's ecological impacts, also spares the lives of dozens of animals each year- amounting to thousands over one's lifetime. The American Dietetic Association calls a well planned vegan diet "healthful and nutritionally adequate […] for individuals during all stages of the lifecycle, including pregnancy, lactation, infancy, childhood, and adolescence, and for athletes" and adds that it "may provide health benefits in the prevention and treatment of certain diseases."

To read the report visit this website provided by FARM - greenyourdiet.org/unreport10.htm

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ANIMALS NOT BOMBS

The Food Not Bombs movement has been organizing for the rights of animals for over 30 years. They have introduced thousands of hungry people to tasty vegan meals that they prepare and share in over 1,000 cities around the world. Food Not Bombs volunteers also organize nonviolent actions in defense of animals, from locking down outside fur stores, organizing campaigns against animal experimentation, and factory farming as well as our annual global day of action outside McDonalds each October 16th where local chapters share veggie burgers in hundreds of cities all over the world. Several volunteers have written vegan cookbooks and started vegan restaurants introducing even more people to the need to protect animals by chaining to a plant based diet. Volunteers also work with groups like Farm Animal Rights Movement, In Defense of Animals, Farm Sanctuary and PETA. Local Food Not Bombs volunteers started animal rescue shelters in 24 cities of Slovakia. Food Not Bombs groups also provide vegan meals for the crews of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society when their ships come into port. Food Not Bombs volunteers have been prosecuted in the United States under the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act and the Patriot Act sending over 20 volunteers to prison.

Food Not Bombs activists have worked to stop the cruelty caused daily to animals by Huntingdon Life (Death) Sciences Laboratories organizing with Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty USA. The SHAC7 are 6 activists and a corporation, Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty USA, Inc., that have been found guilty of multiple federal felonies for their alleged role in simply campaigning to close down the notorious animal testing lab, Huntingdon Life Sciences. Five of the individuals are currently in federal prison (the sixth, Darius Fullmer, has been released, after completing his one year sentence.) They are not accused of actually smashing windows, liberating animals or even attending demonstrations, rather reporting on and encouraging others to engage in legal demonstrations and supporting the ideology of nonviolent direct action. After being found guilty, they are beginning their appeal. Unfortunately this appeal will be done from prison. During their stay they need your support! Finances, spreading the word about their case, books, letters or just a friendly 'Hello"! It just takes a few minutes to brighten the lives of political prisoners.

Andy Stepanian on DEMOCRACY NOW!

AMY GOODMAN: Finally, Andy Stepanian, you're out of prison after several years in prison, a portion of that time at the CMU, this Communication Management Unit in Marion. Can you talk about your activism, reflect on that, and the future of the animal rights movement?

ANDREW STEPANIAN: I can't really speak to the future of the animal rights movement. I've stepped back away from it a little bit myself, simply just out of self-preservation. But I definitely applaud people that fight for animal liberation, that fight for earth liberation, that fight for human rights and justice.
And I have to say that I don't have any regrets. I don't have any regrets, because I know deep down inside—I mean, I've been involved with a variety of causes. I was doing Food Not Bombs, feeding the homeless once a week for about six years. It's the same motivation that I had to do that every Sunday morning that brought me to question what was going on inside Huntingdon Life Sciences, the efficacy of testing on animals and the efficacy of the way we treat animals in this country. And it also brought me to New Orleans, Louisiana, to help folks after Hurricane Katrina. I mean, that's what has motivated me to do what I do. It's the same, I guess, tugging on my heartstrings. So I can't say that I have any regrets for following my heart.

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